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ABSTRACT

The conference report describes a project to increase the use of museums in enhancing and supplementing school and enrichment activities for students at the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD). The values of museum experiences for the deaf are analyzed, and activities coordinated between the Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C., and MSSD are described. Appended is a report summarizing the goals, objectives, evaluation, and recommendations of the project. (CL)

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# Museum Resource Utilization for the Deaf High School Student

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Abstract

The deaf have been deprived of substantial auditory contact. This deficit has had a pervasive effect on cognitive development. The deaf cannot begin the normal process of language acquisition which comes to the hearing. Museums are among the few institutions able to teach people how to see and may offer deaf educators new possibilities, since the major learning modality for the deaf is vision. This report traces the development of museum resource utilization from an idea to a functioning program at the Model Secondary School for the Deaf in Washington D.C.

## Introduction

Deaf children have been deprived of substantial auditory contact. This deficit had had a pervasive effect on cognitive development. The deaf cannot begin the normal process of language acquisition which come to hearing children.

Current research indicates that vision is our most important sense and that what people see best, they learn best.[1]

Because some educators of the deaf think education is limited to what happens in a traditional classroom, verbal skills take priority in our mass educational system. The nation's schools, including schools for the hearing impaired, have virtually ignored the nonverbal world emphasized by museums. Since museums teach visual awareness and perceptual training they can be a vital addition to part of the education of the hearing impaired.

What characteristics do museums have that may be useful to the education of the deaf?

1. Museums have a visual emphasis.
2. Museums have objects that are set aside for exhibit for the purpose of communication.
3. Museums have collection and manpower resources to teach people visual language and an appreciation of beauty.
4. Museums provide a more casual situation than the educational system and offer learning opportunities not available in school.
5. Museums offer opportunities for first hand experience which other media cannot offer.
6. Museums emphasize direct involvement and personal discovery, and order and pace are not forced.
7. Museums provide reinforcement of knowledge and improve learning retention by helping students gain a new awareness of their environment.
8. Museum exhibits are available to people of all ages and abilities. Information is available to individuals who may have difficulties with symbolic language.

[1] Suchman R. (Gaines). Cultural differences in children's color and form preference. Journal of Social Psychology, 1966 70, 3-10.b.

In summary, museums can facilitiate the cognitive and affective growth of the deaf high school student by opening up avenues for learning and discovery.

Frank Oppenheimer, in a 1966 address at the Smithsonian Conference on Museums and Education, said:

> "In school, or in one's living, everything has to be fairly narrow, but in museums, you can see this great variety spread out before you in some way that fits together. You go through the suburbs of a city and you see a factory here, or a school there, or a pub, and it's just all mixed up. In a museum somehow, things that are laid out, in this great variety, can be synthesized."[2]

The following is a narrative report of how museum resource utilization became a reality at the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD).

## II. Implementation

In July 1977 it was proposed that the directors of MSSD utilize museums in and around the nation's capital for the purpose of enhancing and supplementing school curricula and providing enrichment activities for the deaf high school students. The Model Secondary School for the Deaf is located in Washington D.C. and is surrounded by museum resources.

### A. Program with the Museum of African Art

The Museum of African Art was selected as the first target for museum program implementation because:

- since its founding in 1964, the Museum of African Art has been engaged in educational programs through the use of visual and tactile museum experiences,

- museum representatives welcomed the opportunity to develop a program with the Model Secondary School for the Deaf that could be adapted for use by other deaf schools.

During the fall of 1977 and spring of 1978, representatives of the Museum of African Art and MSSD met monthly to arrange the coordination of activities which included staff development for MSSD teachers, sign language classes for museum staff, and curriculum planning.

The Museum staff conducted a workshop at MSSD during the early fall 1977 semester. The prearranged two hour program introduced MSSD faculty to the richness and complexity of African culture through informal disucssion and a demonstration of available resources at the Museum. In December, the Museum participated in the school's winter carnival by having a craft and boutique shop for a day. A long-term art exhibit was also established.

[2] Oppenheimer F, Proceedings of the Smithsonian Conference of Museums Education, 1967, 167 (Summary).

By mid-March, the Museum staff had taught four classes at MSSD. Using sign language techniques, the staff taught classes in African music, geography, and dramatic arts. Presently, teachers at MSSD are planning curriculum units for the next year based on the resources of the Museum.

B. Deaf Awareness

While a comprehensive program was charted with the Museum of African Art, representatives o. other museums were invited to the MSSD for a tour of the facility and exploratory discussions to determine how museums could enhance the educational program. The Baltimore Museum of Art, The National Museum of History and Technology, and the National Museum of Natural History participated.

C. Museum Awareness

The library of the MSSD is a multi-media resource center that includes an extensive collection of print and nonprint materials for student and faculty use. The library is the central repository for books, films, disc-recordings, magazines, videotapes and audio-visual equipment and for this reason is called the Learning Resources Center (LRC). Under the direction of the Information Specialist (also known as the Head Librarian) a series of programs was arranged to heighten teacher and student interest in museums. Activities included an early fall excursion to the Smithsonian Institution folk-life festival, a Smithsonian slide show which introduced faculty members to resources available for instructional purposes; an exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution Travelling Exhibition Service, "Coast to Coast Coasters", a photo-history display of roller coasters; and an antique hearing aid exhibit from the Museum of History and Technology.

III. Observations

The following observations and analyses of museum resource utilization at MSSD is made one year following the conception of the idea.

- Museums in the Washington D.C. area are interested in learning about the special needs of deaf high school students.

- MSSD faculty and staff are more aware of museum resources in Washington as a result of this program.

- Museum staffs have acknowledged the importance of sign language training for tour guides.

- Students at the MSSD are beginning to visit museums on their own time and some are exploring summer job possibilities in museums.

IV. Evaluation

Recently, a summary of museum interaction activities was presented to the directors of MSSD. The report (See attachment A) reviewed the objectives of the program, posed some questions for evaluation, summarized implementation strategies, and made some recommendations for future expansion.

Part I of the report outlines the basic goal of museum resource utilization, and lists three objectives and a rationale.

Part II poses three essential questions for evaluating an educational program:

Can the students benefit?
Can the teachers benefit?
Are there important longitudinal effects?

Part III reviews the objectives of the program, the resources and activities necessary to fulfill the objectives, and the expected outcomes.

Part IV makes recommendations for continued program development based on the outcomes. There is no satisfactory method for evaluating program innovation when people and processes are involved. However, a fluid, or flexible approach is desirable.

The following is the Summary Report (Attachment A) presented to the MSSD directors in spring '78.

I. Goal

To utilize museum resources in Washington D.C. to expand the educational experiences and opportunities of the hearing impaired.

A. Objectives

1. To coordinate programs between the museums and MSSD for the educational development of MSSD students.

2. To support MSSD's curricula by:

   a. integrating museum resources into MSSD programs,
   b. providing educational activities that involve active participation by MSSD,
   c. planning enrichment programs for students during the school day, evenings, and weekends,
   d. providing work study opportunities for MSSD students.

3. To provide opportunities for deaf awareness and sign language training for museum educators.

B. Rationale

Tactile and visual environmental stimuli may assist the deaf in compensation for deafness. Due to the protected status of most residential programs deaf students are not aware of what museums offer. The museum resources in Washington D.C. may be utilized to provide tactile and visual experiences for the deaf.

II. Evaluation: Are the objectives being met?

| Question | Evidence | Data Collection |
|---|---|---|
| Can the students benefit? | Students visit museums on their own, use the Learning Resources Center (LRC), select work sites at museums and improve in classwork. | Daily log book<br>Direct observation<br>Periodic surveys and questionnares<br>Curriculum planning<br>Videotape recording<br>Photo recording<br>Test results<br>Attendance records<br>Interviews |
| Can the teachers benefit? | Teachers work with the LRC staff for curriculum planning, research, and information. Teachers work with museum educators to plan field trips, lesson plans, and new curriculum. | |
| Are there important longitudinal effects? | Also, there is increased use of the LRC and museum resources. Team planning has increased at MSSD. Faculty and students are taking advantage of community resources in Washington D.C. | |

III. Implementation

| OBJECTIVE | RESOURCES | PROCESS | OUTCOME |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deaf awareness<br><br>Coordinate programs between MSSD and museums | MSSD students and faculty, staff<br><br>Museum of African Art staff | Staff Development Workshops<br><br>August 31, 1977<br>October 28, 1977 | Deaf awareness<br><br>Coordinated programs between MSSD and museums<br><br>Educational activities that involve active participation of MSSD students |
| To support MSSD curricula | Museum of African Art staff<br><br>MSSD teachers<br><br>Information Specialist | Monthly meetings for curriculum development | Deaf awareness<br><br>Coordination of museum resources with MSSD curricula |
| | National Museum of National Natural History<br>Social Studies teachers at MSSD | Regular meeting weekly classes at museum-beginning April, 1978 | Deaf awareness<br><br>Coordination of resources<br><br>Planning enrichment activities<br><br>Work study opportunities |
| | Museum of History and Technology Education Department, Science Department, Mathematics Department | (Summer School)<br>Fifth quinmester plans 1978<br><br>Curriculum for Fall 1978 | Support for MSSD curricula |
| Planning enrichment programs for students during the school day, weekends, and evenings | MSSD students, faculty, staff | Field trips to Smithsonian folk-life Festival. Communications<br><br>Field trips-to Museum of African Art, Social Studies and Spanish classes<br><br>Trips to Baltimore Museum of Art. Home Economics<br><br>Trips to Museum of History and Technology. Social Studies<br><br>Trips to National Museum of National History (weekly) Social Studies - curriculum unit, "Man: A Course of Study"<br><br>1 month Smithsonian Travelling Exhibit "Coast to Coast Coasters" at MSSD<br><br>2 month Display of African Art at MSSD<br><br>Hearing Aid Exhibit | Deaf awareness<br><br>Coordinate programs between MSSD and museums<br><br>Integration of museum resources with MSSD programs<br><br>Providing educational activities that involve active participation by MSSD student body |

| OBJECTIVE | RESOURCES | PROCESS | OUTCOME |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deaf awareness | Department of Education Baltimore Museum of Art<br><br>Art Teachers MSSD<br>Information Specialist<br>Visitors Coordinator | Tour of MSSD, January 11 | Deaf awareness<br><br>To coordinate programs between museums and MSSD |
| | Department of Education<br>Museum of History and Technology 23 Docents (tour guides)<br><br>Visitors Coordinator<br><br>Information Specialist<br><br>Principal<br><br>Special Projects Coordinator | Tour of MSSD, January 23<br><br>Deaf awareness program and talks | Deaf awareness<br><br>Provide opportunities for sign language training |
| | Department of Education<br>National Museum of Natural History<br><br>Vistors Coordinator<br>Information Specialist<br>Social Studies Teacher<br>Principal<br>Science Teacher | Tour of MSSD, March 6 | Deaf awareness<br><br>To support MSSD curricula |
| To coordinate programs between museums and MSSD | Coordinator of Education Department of Smithsonian teachers at MSSD | Department of Education meeting-slide tape presentation of museum resources | Planning enrichment activities and programs for students during the day, evenings, and weekends |
| To coordinate programs between museums and MSSD | Staff of Museum of African Art<br><br>Entire faculty, staff, and student body of MSSD | Winter Carnival<br><br>Demonstrations, Fashions,<br><br>Boutique, Films | Integrating museum resources with MSSD programs<br><br>Providing educational activities that involve active participation by the MSSD student body |
| To provide opportunities for deaf awareness and sign language training for museum educators | MSSD sign teachers<br><br>Staff members of Museum of African Art<br><br>Museum of Natural History Docents (tour guides)<br><br>Sign Language teacher | Sign language classes since fall 1977 at MSSD<br><br>Sign language course taught at museum | Deaf awareness<br><br>Sign language skills acquired<br><br>Planning enrichment activities that involve active participation by the MSSD student body |

IV. Recommendations

Priorities should be set in the museum interaction program to provide a planning base and periodic evaluation.

1. Program implementation and coordination should be done through one central source - The Learning Resources Center (LRC). The LRC would provide current information, needs assessment, planning assistance, coordination of inservice planning, forcasting and evaluation.

2. Strategies for implementation should be matched with objectives.

3. Dissemination of program development should be continued through:

   a. The monthly Learning Resources Center publication, LRC Newsletter, which circulates to deaf schools and museum education departments.
   b. Gallaudet College campus publications that circulate to deaf programs, around the United States.
   c. Public Radio.
   d. The TTY news service - a teletype communication for the deaf.
   e. Announcement flyers, posters, and interoffice memorandum to inform the school community.
   f. Information Specialist (Head Librarian) is to attend school meetings
   g. Ongoing record keeping.

4. Periodic evaluation

The Model Secondary School for the Deaf is located in Washington D.C. and has abundant museum resources at its disposal. Education programs serving the deaf in other parts of the country may have no access to museum services. They may require information about resources and their utilization.

Educators need to identify elements in museums that have potential for education of the deaf high school student and share this information with other educators. If visual and tactile experiences can be beneficial to the deaf we must continue to explore their potential.

# IS THERE A NEED?

Residential School for
Hearing Impaired High School Students

**Model Secondary School for the Deaf**

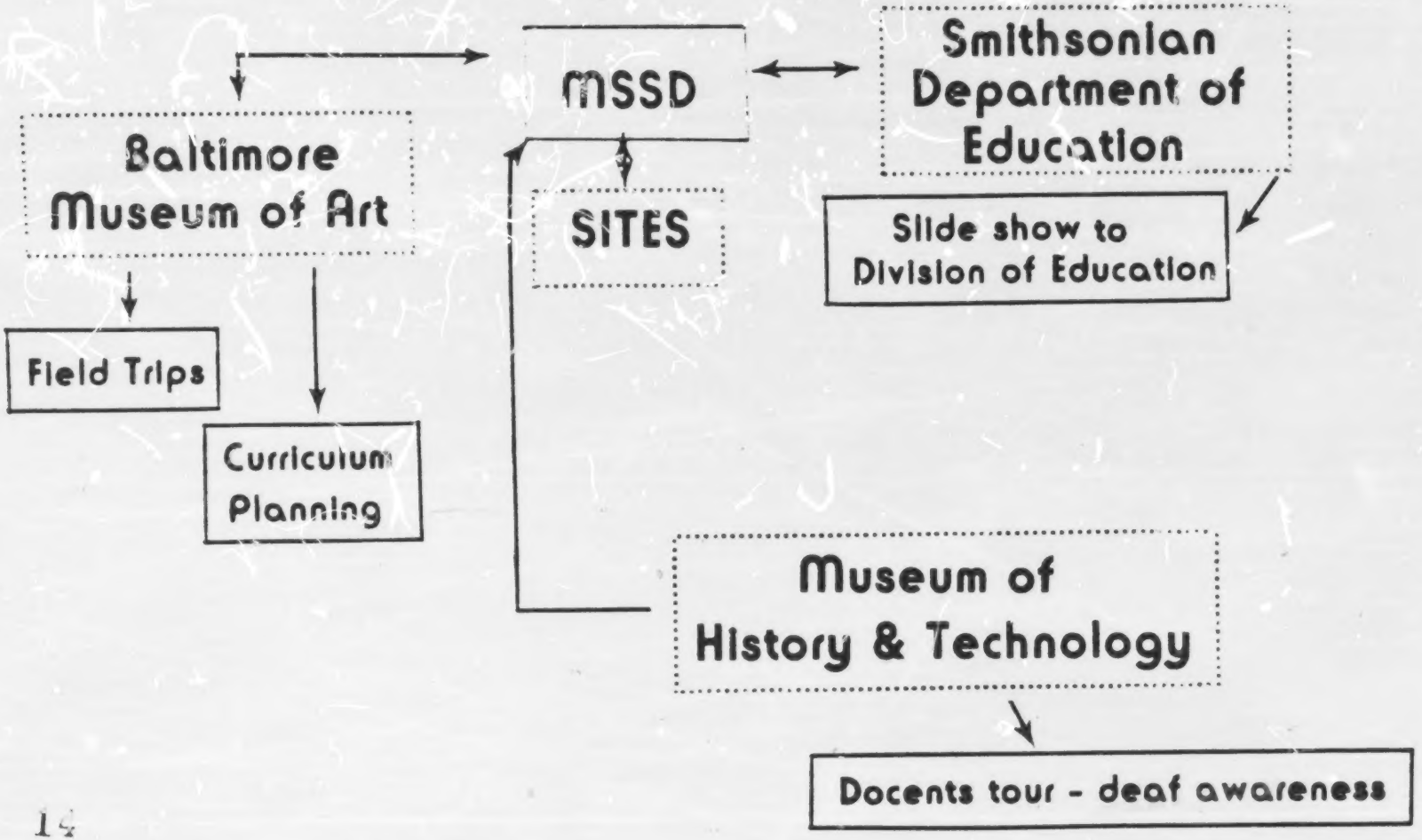
no bridges
or
narrow
bridges

**Museum Resources in Washington, D.C.**



13

# Links and Bridges between the Model Secondary School for the Deaf and Museums in and around Washington, D.C.



## Links and Bridges between the Model Secondary School for the Deaf and Museums in and around Washington, D.C.

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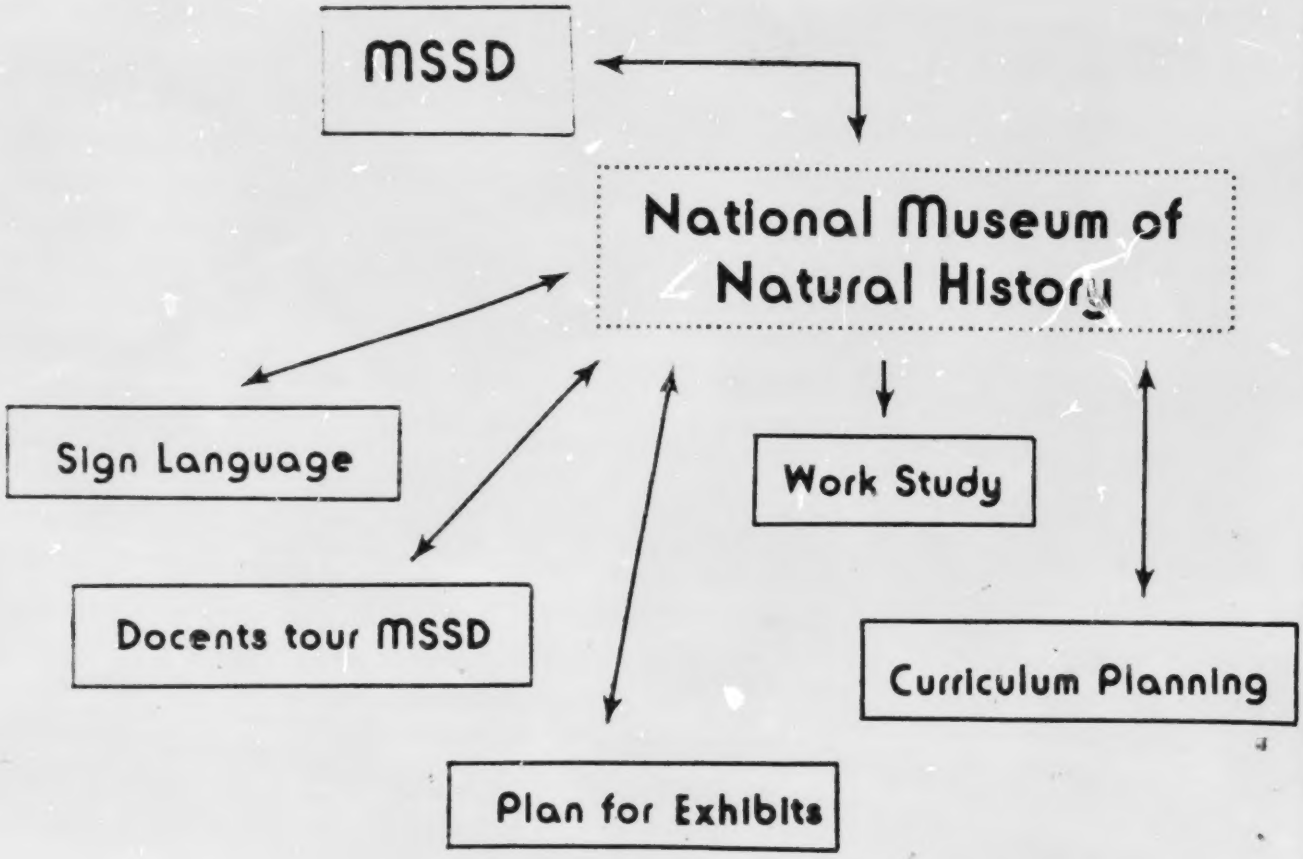
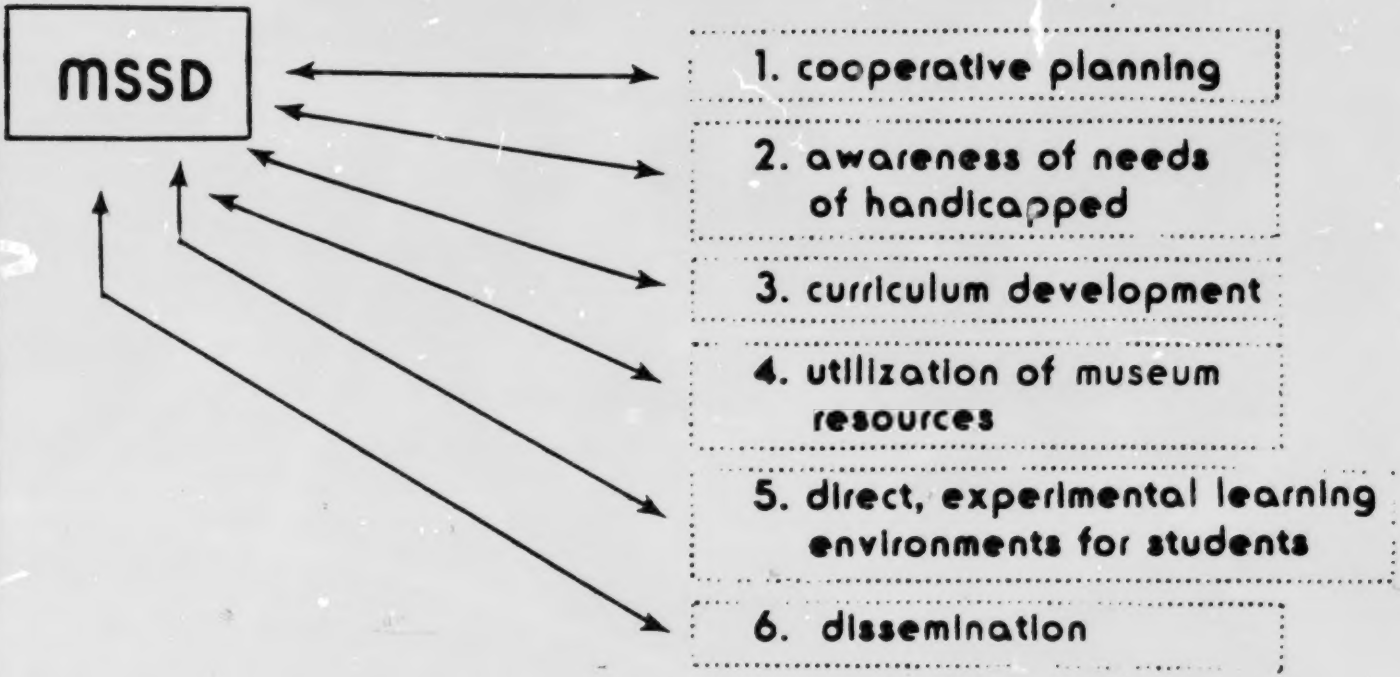


# Museum Interaction

## Effects of Bridge - building Links



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